



Advent Part 4 – Joy
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USING THIS SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

We have provided all the Scriptures references in the sermon and some discussion questions for you to use to discuss the weekend message.

This Sermon Discussion Guide is only a tool to aid you in meeting the needs of your group. For most groups, there are too many questions to answer in one session together. Give priority to the needs and pace of your group members.

While the questions are important, remember your group's goal is to create an atmosphere that will foster true friendships. Use the discussion questions as you see fit but emphasize the relationships.

JOY

Webster's Definition: *the emotion evoked by well-being, success, or good fortune or by the prospect of possessing what one desires.*

Greek Word: *chará: cheerfulness, calm delight: -gladness, exceeding joy.*

Warren Wiersbe Definition: *That inward peace and sufficiency that is not affected by outward circumstances.*

[Luke 2:1-13, ESV]

¹ In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ² This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ And all went to be registered, each to his own town. ⁴ And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, ⁵ to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. ⁶ And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷ And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. ⁸ And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. ¹⁰ And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

Happiness vs Joy

Happiness is based on circumstances, is limited to our feelings, and is temporary.

Joy is not based on what's happening around us, is greater than our emotions, and is eternal and forever.

[James 1:2-4, ESV]

² Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³ for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴ And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

Key Point:

1. Joy is a Gift

[Romans 15:13 ESV]

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

Key Point:

2. Joy is a Fruit

[Galatians 5:22-23, ESV]

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Key Point:

3. Joy is an Action

[John 15:10-11 ESV]

¹⁰ If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. ¹¹ These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

Obedience is an action that produces joy

Key Point:

4. Joy is a Position

Joy is a position of hope

[Hebrews 12:1-2, ESV]

¹ Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Key Points:

1. Joy is a Gift
2. Joy is a Fruit
3. Joy is an Action
4. Joy is a Position

Applications for the Week:

1. Take time this week to evaluate your level of joy. What changes do you need to make to regain that joy?
2. Position yourself for joy by making time to read your Bible, trust it and obey what it says.

Discussion Questions:

1. Share one Christmas tradition that your family shared growing up.
2. How does our definition of joy impact our lives?
3. What is the difference between happiness and joy?
4. In Luke 2, what do these six words convey together: "Good News," "great joy," and "all people"? Why do they all point to a person?
5. How can you have joy during difficulty or tragedy? How can you access this kind of joy?
6. Are there areas of your life that are robbing you of joy? What action do you need to take to start experiencing the fullness of joy?
7. Why is obedience connected to joy?
8. How have you positioned yourself for joy?